

THE USE AND ABUSE OF MACHIAVELLI:
THE SIXTEENTH-CENTURY
FRENCH ADAPTATION

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It can be said that an author truly lives only after his death. He attains lasting life through spiritual reincarnation when his ideas are taken up by others, assimilated, commented upon, criticized, modified and developed from the nucleus of his works. The experience of Machiavelli is a case in point. During his lifetime his doctrines did not circulate beyond a small group, and it was his comedy, *Mandragola*, not his political writings, that made his reputation as a humanist. Guicciardini, who befriended the discredited Florentine secretary despite their social and political disparities, perhaps knew and understood him better than any of his contemporaries; yet his judgment of his friend's political counsels was far from positive. Had the *Prince* and the *Discourses* been published earlier, their author might have tasted notoriety, even intellectual martyrdom, and not have died in obscurity.¹ What enabled Machiavelli to rise above the relative obscurity of his lifetime has been his treatment by posterity: the interpretations and distortions of subsequent generations which adapted his ideas or reacted against them for some political or ideological end and in so doing made him into a legend—a virtual caricature of himself. Machiavelli survived, then, because he was turned into a Machiavellian, and it is a crucial phase of this transformation that is the subject of this study.

Machiavellism came into being only after the death of its eponym. This is not to say that it was not inherent in the *modus operandi* of fifteenth-century Italian politics with its firm grounding in *ragione di stato*, but only when the amorphous assumptions of the quattrocento were given coherent and aphoristic expression in the writings of Machiavelli could a conscious concept develop. Even that was not

¹ Apart from the *Mandragola* and a poem, *The First Decade*, the only work to be published during Machiavelli's lifetime was the *Art of War* (1521). The first edition of the *Discourses* appeared in 1531 (Blado, Rome), four years after his death, while the *Prince* and the *History of Florence* did not see print until 1532 (Blado, Rome), although a number of his works circulated among friends in the Oricellari circle. Guicciardini, who had access to manuscript editions, commented upon Machiavelli's political concepts in the *Considerations on the "Discourses" of Machiavelli* and the *Ricordi*, taking issue, among other things, with his friend's positivism, his political abstractions, his notion of imitation of the past, his pessimistic view of human nature, and his faith in popular government.

enough, for Machiavelli did not create Machiavellism. Rather it was a developing and changing doctrine—one might call it a current of thought, even a cultural barometer—which grew from the embryo of his writings.² The shape that it took at any particular moment or circumstance was defined by those, most notably in the few succeeding generations, who reacted against those writings and in so doing created the image of Machiavelli that suited their needs. In this sense, Machiavellism owes its existence less to Machiavelli than to the anti-Machiavellians who resurrected the Florentine only to use him as a device by which to slander their adversaries.

The attacks on Machiavelli were too widespread during the sixteenth century to label anti-Machiavellism a French phenomenon, and the dubious distinction once accorded the Huguenot jurisconsult, Innocent Gentillet, as the creator of the popular image of the Florentine secretary has since been removed as a result of recent research. Yet there is much truth to the notion that anti-Machiavellism, as a conscious polemical weapon, was forged in the fires of French political and religious conflict.³ Machiavelli's spirit, so it seems, preferred to emerge from the shadows during periods of crisis, and in the France of the religious wars it found a propitious moment to make its debut. It was here that Marlowe placed it when he wrote: "Yet was his soul but flown beyond the Alps."⁴ Other contemporaries recognized its transmigrated form in such dissimilar personae as the Duke

² The literature on the impact of Machiavelli in the sixteenth century is neither extensive nor notably interpretative. The best critical studies are Mario Praz, "Machiavelli and the Elizabethans," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 14 (1928), 1-49; Donald R. Kelley, "Murd'rous Machiavel in France: A Post Mortem," *Political Science Quarterly*, 85, No. 4 (Dec. 1970), 545-59; Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli* (London, 1964); G. Cardascia, "Machiavel et Jean Bodin," *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et renaissance*, 3 (1943), 129-67; and J. R. Charbonnel, *La pensée italienne au XVIe siècle et le courant libertin* (Paris, 1919). Details on French anti-Machiavellism can be found in Victor Waille, *Machiavel en France* (Paris, 1884), and in Albert Chérel, *La pensée de Machiavel en France* (Paris, 1935); the Spanish experience is treated briefly by Donald W. Bleznick in "Spanish Reaction to Machiavelli in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 19 (1958), 542-50. Edward Meyer's *Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Drama* (Weimar, 1897) is sorely out-of-date. Other works which treat the subject in part include Guiseppe Prezzoloni, *Machiavelli anticristo* (Rome, 1954); Charles Benoist, *Le Machiavéllisme* (Paris, 1936); Guiliano Procacci, *Studi sulla fortuna del Machiavelli* (Rome, 1965); Rodolfo de Mattei, *Dal premachiavellismo all' antimachiavellismo* (Florence, 1969); Antonio Panella, *Gli Antimachiavellisti* (Florence, 1943); and Meinecke's classic, *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte* (Munich, 1924).

³ Mario Praz, who does not credit Gentillet with a major influence upon England, nevertheless saw France as the place of origin of anti-Machiavellism. "Machiavelli and the Elizabethans," 1. See note 31 below.

⁴ *The Jew of Malta* I, 1-4.

of Guise, Henry III, the *politique* apologist Pierre de Belloy, Jesuit advocates of tryannicide, Henry of Navarre, and Catherine de' Medici who, it was said, not only read her Machiavelli daily but also celebrated his "holiday" with the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day. The sixteenth-century imagination, though, obsessed as it was with necromancy and related aspects of the occult, was disposed to indiscriminate conjuration, and what was invoked as Machiavelli's ghost turned out all too frequently to be only a daemonic imposter.

The French reaction to Machiavelli was of two sorts. There were the serious students of politics who read his works carefully, frequently with fascination and only occasionally with admiration. These French scholars, it has been suggested, approached him from the standpoint of the jurisconsult rather than the politician and thus had little sympathy for his oversimplification of history and his easy causal analysis.⁵ Yet, if they were repelled by his methodology and assumptions, they did not hesitate to borrow his ideas, often disguising them to avoid undesirable association. Less sophisticated use of the Florentine was made by a variety of polemicists who, interested primarily in what he could represent, made no particular attempt to get at the intrinsic nature of his thought. Whether they read his works or derived their Machiavelli second-hand is not always clear, for they usually dealt with him only *en passant* in the course of attacking a more vital adversary. Unlike his English counterpart, the French Machiavelli did not become a stereotyped stage figure.⁶ Where he derived his popular image was from the associations and insinuations of these pamphleteers who used his name indiscriminately and irreverently; it was they rather than his scholarly readers who were responsible for the "French face" of Machiavelli.

The question, so crucial to Machiavelli scholarship, of whether or not he was misunderstood, is irrelevant here. Anti-Machiavellism, after all, was a French cultural phenomenon, a reflection of certain Northern attitudes and predispositions about politics, and it reveals less about Machiavelli's thought than about the state of mind of his readers and detractors. By delineating precisely what it was in this Italian's conception of politics, or in his "bag of tricks," that these Frenchmen condemned or appropriated, and what prejudices they hoped to evoke in citing him, one becomes aware of some of their basic assumptions about the state. Machiavellism or, more precisely, its less subtle response, anti-Machiavellism, then, is a symptom of

⁵ This is the conclusion of Donald R. Kelley ("Murd'rous Machiavel in France," 557-59) to whom my debt is obvious.

⁶ At least one contemporary French playwright, Jean de la Taille, knew Machiavelli in some depth. See note 23 below.

French political and religious sensibilities rather than the apotheosis of an idea.

French interest in Machiavelli developed slowly. Until the translation of his *Discourses on Livy* in 1544, thirteen years after their publication in Italy, there is not much evidence of a Machiavellian presence in France.⁷ When he finally arrived, it was amidst such fanfare and praise that one could hardly have imagined him later as an object of hatred and scorn. Jacques Gohory, the translator of the *Discourses*, hailed him as the most sincere and least Machiavellian of men:

I assure you that once you have come to know him you would not have missed him for anything in the world; for he is an honest and reliable man. . . . His merchandise is neither disguised nor embellished.

Readers were advised to treat him with "every kindness and courtesy."⁸ Apparently they did, for four years later we are told that he was better appreciated in France than in his own country.⁹

Machiavelli's first French apologists, of whom there were very few, were his translators who, whether from a sincere attraction to

⁷ If not influence, it has been suggested that there may have been some degree of parallel development. Claude de Seyssel, a near contemporary, analyzed monarchical institutions in practical and realistic terms in his *Grand Monarchy of France*, and there are many observations in the *Memoirs* of Philippe de Commines that could have been written by Machiavelli himself. A number of important similarities have been noted between the *Prince* and the *Institution of the Prince* written by the humanist, Guillaume Budé, during Machiavelli's lifetime. Claude Bontems et al., *Le Prince dans la France des XVI^e et XVII^e siècles* (Paris, 1965), 26-29, 51-52. On the parallels between Seyssel and Machiavelli see J. H. Hexter, *The Vision of Politics on the Eve of the Reformation: More, Machiavelli, and Seyssel* (New York, 1973), 9-17, 213-30, and J. Russell Major, "The Renaissance Monarchy as Seen by Erasmus, More, and Seyssel," in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E. H. Harbison*, ed. by T. K. Raab and J. E. Seigel (Princeton, 1969), 24-31.

⁸ *Les discovrs de l'estat de paix et de gverre de messire Nicolas Machiavelli* (Paris, 1559), prefatory epistle. The preface is identical with that in the 1544 edition. See Adolf Gerber, *Niccolò Machiavelli, Die Handschriften, Ausgaben und Übersetzungen seiner Werke im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Turin, 1962), III, 21-22, 24. This work has been of singular value here.

⁹ At least this is the assertion made in a sonnet accompanying the 1548 edition of Gohory's translation:

Et favellar Francese non gli spiace
Tra Francesi, perchioche, ove fu nato
Non tanto, com'in Francia, aggrada &
piace:
Ma fra i suoi nessun Propheta è stimato—

verse which perhaps reveals more about his discredit at home than his reputation abroad. Gerber, *Niccolò Machiavelli* III, 23.

his doctrines or the pecuniary hope of promoting sales, represented him in the most extravagant of terms. Gaspard d'Auvergne, in his 1553 translation of the *Prince*, praised its author for the relevance of his political lessons and for uncovering the "malice and deceit of men"; and, in recommending the *Art of War* to the French nobility, the translator hinted that a mere reading not only would empower them to recapture the Holy Land from the Turk but would establish French military hegemony from pole to pole. Of all the hyperbole, though, none was more exaggerated than that of Gohory who in 1571 praised the Florentine as "the noblest mind [*le plus gentil esprit*] to have appeared on earth in the past few centuries" and suggested that his "excellent doctrine" be committed to memory.¹⁰ Machiavelli was welcomed with no less eloquence, though with somewhat less enthusiasm, by contemporary poets who lent their sonnets to these early translations. Muret praised the "divine Gaspar" for his rendition of the *Prince*, and Remy Belleau and the renowned Etienne Jodelle appended their encomia along with Muret's to Guillaume Cappel's simultaneous translation of the same work. Their attention, however, was directed more to the literary quality of the translation than to its contents.¹¹

Judging from the number of French editions, the advertising campaign on behalf of Machiavelli was successful, but the rhetoric did not conceal the defects in the product. Even salesmen like Gaspar d'Auvergne had to acknowledge the "intemperate language" and the digressions from the path of virtue, which he excused because "the law of the world" is "naturally vicious." More revealing was the fact that, even before his edition of the *Prince* was in the hands of French readers, Cappel felt obliged to ward off the accusation of irreligion.¹² One wonders whether this feature of Machiavelli's reputation had preceded his arrival in France or whether his casual treatment of religion in the *Discourses* had already begun to rankle Gallic sensitivities. In any event, the seriousness of the accusation is impossible to determine, for Machiavelli had not yet received attention from French writers. A notable exception was the Protestant jurist and legal historian, Charles Dumoulin, who in 1551 enlisted Machiavelli's negative assessment of papal temporal rule in his own Gallican

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, III, 31, 28-29, 25.

¹¹ The sonnets curiously are placed at the end of the translation. Jodelle's praise of Cappel is nothing more than a salute to an esteemed friend. See Enea Balmas, *Un poeta del rinascimento francese, Étienne Jodelle, la sua vita, il suo tempo* (Florence, 1962), 126-27.

¹² Gerber, *Niccolò Machiavelli*, III, 32, 34.

cause.¹³ As was to be the case for some years, it was Machiavelli the historian, the dispassionate political observer, who was summoned; the deeper moral and religious implications of his writings were generally overlooked or rationalized. This is somewhat surprising in view of the growing chorus of denunciations outside of France by Cardinal Reginald Pole, the Dominican Ambrogio Caterino, and Bishop Osorio, among others, which by 1557 was to secure the *Prince* a place on the first papal Index.¹⁴

For three decades after his arrival in France Machiavelli remained a tolerated visitor, not entirely above suspicion but certainly accepted far more than his compatriots whose physical presence had already begun to produce xenophobic murmurs. One explanation for this acceptance is that his appearance coincided with a rising French interest in the "science" of politics and the emergence on to the political scene of a new genus of political man who was ready to give an autonomous role to politics and, if necessary, to subordinate religious principles to political needs.¹⁵ Certainly the appeal of Machiavelli to a scholar like Louis Le Roy, who had come to regard "utility" as an essential ingredient of "political science," is understandable; yet it was his very association with the politics of utility and with the ascendancy of the political man, the *politique*, that was later responsible for transforming the name of Machiavelli into a term of opprobrium. The "kindness and courtesy" with which the Florentine was received at this time is perhaps better explained by the separation that was somehow maintained between his own dicta and French political events. Only when the historical necessities of the religious wars drew him into the midst of the political arena did he become a sinister and discredited figure.

The year 1572 marks a watershed in the development of Machiavelli's image. Until that date—one might call it his "welcoming period"—he received the attention of only a handful of French scholars. Their knowledge of him was more than cursory, their treat-

¹³ *Les Commentaires analytiques sur l'edit [sic] des petites dates in Opera omnia* (Paris, 1681), IV, 464. Guillaume Du Bellay, a cousin of the famous poet, borrowed a number of passages from the *Art of War* for his *Les Instructions sur le fait de la guerre* (Paris, 1548).

¹⁴ Pole, who may have read the *Prince* in manuscript, was the first to sound the trumpet call against Machiavelli as the counsellor of tyrants. *Apologia ad Carolum Quintum Caesarem*, in *Epistolarum Reginaldi Poli* (Brescia, 1744-57), I, 38. Osorio's *De nobilitate Christiana libri tres*, in which he attacked Machiavelli's comparison of Christianity and paganism, appeared in 1542, while Caterino's denunciation of the *Prince* and the *Discourses* (*De libris a Christiano detestandis et a Christianismo eliminandis*) was published ten years later.

¹⁵ Kelley, "Murd'rous Machiavel," 550-51.

ment relatively dispassionate, their reference to his name infrequent. In fact, it was not until 1555 when Guillaume de la Perrière sought his assistance in eulogizing royalty that Machiavelli was first mentioned in a French political treatise;¹⁶ then his name, though not his image, seems to have disappeared until the following decade when it emerged in the mainstream of French political thought. If Le Roy is at all representative, what ensued among scholars was a love-hate relationship in which Machiavelli's irresistible positivism assuaged sensibilities offended by his cynicism and irreligion. Le Roy might condemn the architect of the *Prince* as "an author without conscience and without religion" whose only interest was "worldly power and glory," but that did not prevent him from rounding out his course in Aristotelian politics with some modern lessons from Machiavelli and even incorporating segments of the *Art of War* into his own discussion of arms.¹⁷ The Machiavellian accents are less distinctive though quite detectable in the *Recherches* of Etienne Pasquier, yet he was to declare the *Prince* and its author worthy only of the flames.¹⁸

Of all his French readers, none was more conversant with Machiavelli's work than Jean Bodin, who initially treated him with calm tones and favorable judgment. In the *Methodus* of 1566 the Florentine secretary is mentioned no less than twenty times and is praised as the "first . . . for about 1,200 years after barbarism had overwhelmed everything" to write extensively about politics.¹⁹ Unlike most of his contemporaries, who viewed him as "the forger of tyranny," Bodin perceived that Machiavelli was at heart a republican. Ten years later, though, in the *République* that perception is lost and Bodin indulges in traditional anti-Machiavellian vituperation. The preface contains a scathing attack against that "atheist" whose "political science consists of nothing but tyrannical ruses that he has

¹⁶ *Le miroir politique* (Paris, 1555), 13, 20, 23.

¹⁷ *Les Politiques d'Aristote* (Paris, 1576), 372, 380-81. The work was first published in 1567. In a short history of political philosophy which appeared the same year (*De l'origine, antiquité, progrès, excellence, et vtilité de l'art politique*) Le Roy makes no mention of Machiavelli, but he does emphasize as essential "the knowledge of political science" and he sees "public utility" as an important consideration in politics (4-5). His appropriation of the *Art of War* is found in *De la Vicissitude ou variété des choses en l'univers, et concurrence des armes et des lettres* . . . (Paris, 1575). See Mattei, *Dal premachiavellismo all'anti-machiavellismo*, 269-79.

¹⁸ A Monsieur Chandon, Secrétaire du Roy, in *Les oeuvres d'Estienne Pasquier* (Amsterdam, 1723), II, col. 231. On Machiavellian themes in the *Recherches* see Vittorio de Caprariis, *Propaganda e pensiero politico in Francia durante le guerre di religione* (Naples, 1959), I, 283-89.

¹⁹ *Methodus ad faciem historiarum cognitum* (1566), in *Oeuvres philosophiques*, ed. by Pierre Mesnard (Paris, 1951), 167.

searched out in all corners of Italy," and throughout the treatise Bodin takes pains to divorce himself from the Italian, frequently hiding behind Plato to avoid association.²⁰

Had Bodin's estimation undergone a complete *volte-face*, and if so, why? Actually, at no time was Bodin positively enamored of Machiavelli. What praise he bestows upon him in the *Methodus* is qualified by criticism of his historical inaccuracies. Invariably he cites him only to refute him, although he does so without animosity. When he later turns on Machiavelli there is reason to believe that it is not so much because of the latter's "atheism," his "tyrannical ruses," or even his general amorality as his lack of historical depth and the inapplicability of his type of "wisdom" to the French monarchical state. The anti-Machiavellian tone of the *République*, moreover, tends to obscure, but does not conceal, what has been described as "zones of Machiavellian influence" where the implications of the solutions that Bodin proposes suggest a limited discipleship. The two political theorists were in substantial accord in their statism, their political realism, their utilitarianism, their reliance upon force, and their readiness to employ all conceivable means for a desired political end, although Bodin, considering his milieu, would not separate politics entirely from morality.²¹

What accounts for Bodin's altered stance in 1576 was a climate of opinion increasingly hostile to things Italian, which made it dangerous to identify with Machiavelli even on the most innocuous matter. Now French authors were finding it prudent to shun his company or at least to keep him at arm's length. In 1569 it was still possible for a polemicist like François de Belleforest to refer to Machiavelli admiringly while extolling royalty and Catholicism.²² Even on the eve of St. Bartholomew's Day flattery was added to admiration with Jean de la Taille's *Prince nécessaire*, a manual in doggerel modelled on the Florentine's own handbook; but La Taille's *Prince*, ironically coming from the pen of a likely Huguenot, who with unconscious foresight presented it to Henry of Navarre, proved to be both the first and the

²⁰ *République*, preface, French edition of 1577, Aii v°. See Henri Baudrillart, *Bodin et son temps* (Paris, 1853), 224-27. Among the more recent comparisons between Bodin and Machiavelli see the various comments in *Jean Bodin: Verhandlungen der internationalen Bodin Tagung in München*, ed. by Horst Denzer (Munich, 1973), especially in the papers by Donald R. Kelley and Kenneth D. McRae.

²¹ Cardascia, "Machiavelli et Jean Bodin," esp. 147-67.

²² *Arraignment fort gentil et proffitable sur l'infélicité qui soyt ordinairement le bonheur des grans, avec un beau discours sur l'excellence des Princes du sang de France . . .* (Paris, 1569), 22v°, 24v°.

last of a type.²³ The Massacre of St. Bartholomew, that perfidious Italian-style plot directly out of the apocalypse of "the Queen-Mother's bible," abruptly altered the fortunes of the author of the *Prince*. Suddenly he acquired the popularity that had hitherto eluded him, but with popularity also came infamy. Anti-Machiavellism, initially the product of Protestant indignation and a deep-seated Italophobia, removed Machiavelli from the studies of scholars and placed him in the arena of political and religious struggle. From that time on he became an active participant in the polemics of the Wars of Religion, without any firm loyalties, occasionally identified as a defender of the crown, sometimes as a zealous adherent to the Catholic League but most frequently as a strategist in the camp of the *politiques*. Machiavelli's newfound popularity may have brought about greater familiarity with his name, but it did not result in a wider diffusion or a deeper understanding of his ideas. However, with the advent of anti-Machiavellism interest in him as a serious student of politics diminished. He ceased to be an object of disinterested speculation and became instead the object of violent passions, invective and vilification.

The man most frequently identified with this fall into disrepute is the Dauphinois lawyer, Gentillet, whose *Contre-Machiavel*²⁴ was not only the prototype of the anti-Machiavellian treatise but also a handy reference book for subsequent vilifiers. Gentillet did not originate French anti-Machiavellism. Le Roy and Ronsard, among others, had long before cautioned their fellow countrymen about the malicious theories of the Florentine secretary; many of its ingredients were present in the resentment against Italian influences at court that swept France during the 1560s and which focused on "that collection of villains from Florence."²⁵ Huguenot exiles in Switzerland immedi-

²³ René Pintard, "Une adaptation de Machiavel au XVI^e siècle: le 'Prince nécessaire' de Jean de la Taille," *Revue de littérature comparée*, 13 (1933), 385-402. *Le Prince nécessaire* can be found in *Oeuvres de Jean de la Taille, Seigneur de Bon-daroy* (Geneva, 1968, reimpression of Paris edition 1878-82), II, 99-143.

²⁴ The more complete title is *Discovrs svr les moyens de bien gouverner et maintenir en bonne paix vn Royaume ou autre Principauté. . . . Contre Nicolas Machiavel Florentin* ([Geneva], 1576). See the excellent critical edition prepared by A. D'Andrea and P. D. Stewart (Florence, 1974). C. Edward Rathé has also prepared a modern text (Geneva, 1968) as well as an analysis, "Innocent Gentillet and the First 'Anti-Machiavel,'" *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et renaissance*, 27 (1965), 186-225. On Gentillet's debt to the *Monarchomachi* see D'Andrea, "The Political Context of Innocent Gentillet's Anti-Machiavel," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 23 (1970), 397-411.

²⁵ *Response a vne lettre escrete a Compiègne . . . touchant le mescontentement de la noblesse de France* (n.p., 1567), Aiii r^o-v^o. A Protestant tract, written at the same time, complained "that the Italians have gained such credit and favour at court by the subtleties and artificial inventions for raising money from the poor that Frenchmen seem aliens and foreigners by comparison. . . ." *Articles des plaintes et doleances dy peuple, sur lesquelles est fondée l'occasiō de la guerre presente* (n.p., 1567), Bii v^o.

ately detected the hand of Machiavelli behind the massacre; at least they called attention to its Italian style. The author of the *Reveille Matin* saw it as the worst in a series of disgraceful Machiavellian-inspired official acts;²⁶ and when Pierre Charpentier sought to justify the crown's use of force as a legitimate means of assuring religious unity, he was denounced by Pierre Portus, his former colleague at the University of Geneva, for being at one with the "evil Florentine" in "regarding religion as nothing but a kind of external order holding men to certain obligations."²⁷

What Gentillet did was to build these insinuations into a structured criticism of policies that he believed culminated in the massacre, and Machiavelli served as a whipping boy for administering a thorough tongue-lashing against tyranny. If the *Contre-Machiavel* seemed to be attacking the abstract, speculative doctrines of the Florentine, it was primarily to protest against the recent policies of the crown, against the Italianized Frenchmen behind it, and against the harsh treatment of the Protestants by Charles IX and Henry III, the latter of whom, it was said, always carried his "Machiavelli" in his pocket.²⁸ Whereas his fellow Huguenots, the *monarchomachi*, were registering similar protests with calls for popular sovereignty, Gentillet's respect for monarchy was too deep to do more than offer a lesson to the crown. Considering the didactic quality of his work and

²⁶ The first dialogue warns against Charles IX's "schoolmasters" who "devise additions and glosses" to the *Prince* "more dangerous than the text itself" (the textual reference here is: "In what ways Princes should keep their faith"); and the young king is criticized for having "associated himself with the world's greatest villain." *Le Reveille Matin des Francois, et de levr's voisins* (Edinburgh, 1574), 21, 37, 40, 107, 141-42. The second dialogue, though, written perhaps a year later, finds the same Machiavellian advice, if no less pernicious, then at least useful and suggests to the Huguenots: "If there ever was a time to profit from ruse and Italian malice it is now" (141). Even the detractors apparently were able to separate means and ends when the occasion required it. See J. H. M. Salmon, *Society in Crisis: France in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1975), 195, fn. 31.

²⁷ *Ad Petri Carpentarii . . . virulentam epistolam responsio* (n.p., 1573), 31. Portus was joined with similar replies by his coreligionists, one of whom reminded Charpentier that he was addressing "Frenchmen and Christians and not Italians or Italo-Frenchmen." Pierre Fabre, *Traite du quel on peut apprendre en quel cas il est permis à l'homme chrestien de porter les armes. . .* (n.p., 1576), 64. The original was in Latin. See also Pierre Burin, *Response a vne epistre commençant: Seigneur Eluide, où est traité des massacres faits en France, en l'an 1572* (Basel, 1574), esp. 8-9. Charpentier's justification is found in *Epistola ad Franciscum Portum, Cretensem, in qua docetur persecutiones ecclesiarum Galliae, non culpa eorum qui religionem profitebantur, sed eorum qui factionem & conspirationem . . . fouebat, accidisse* (n.p., 1572).

²⁸ This was the observation of the fanatical anti-Valois Jean Boucher. *De iusta Henrici tertii abdicatione e Francorum regno* (Lyon, 1591), II, 33.

its highly moralistic tone, it could be conceived as falling into the tradition of the Renaissance *speculum principis*.²⁹

The work nevertheless is unmistakably polemical in nature, and in spite of the attention he lavished on it, Gentillet's grasp of Machiavelli's thought was weaker than that of Bodin or even Le Roy. His familiarity with the Florentine was, in fact, quite limited: he knew only the *Prince* and the *Discourses*; about their author's life he was both ignorant and uninterested. Gentillet's tract itself is discursive and banal, replete with distortion, and he attacks with mace rather than rapier; but his very lack of sophistication and his failure to represent his adversary accurately contributed to his success as a polemicist. He reduced Machiavelli's ideas to a series of simplistic, often exaggerated, maxims, taken out of context, which he proceeded to crush one by one with a ponderous array of historical examples, authoritative opinion, and logic. The campaign consisted of three assaults. In the first, Gentillet assailed absolutism and arbitrary government in the name of limited monarchy; secondly, he attacked Machiavelli's atheism in what is probably the heart of the book. Here one finds his famous argument for religious toleration, a plea that is vitiated by his own insistence that the prince uphold the "true" religion.³⁰ Finally, Gentillet denounced the whole pantheon of Machiavellian "virtues": cruelty, cunning, deceit, hypocrisy, perjury, faithlessness, and dissension.

Notwithstanding its defects, the *Contre-Machiavel* remained for some time the most thorough exposé of the evils that lurked behind Machiavelli's theories, and in France it was the only work of its type. What role it played in the changing fortunes of the Florentine, beyond signalling the advent of French anti-Machiavellism, is difficult to define. For a time it was believed that Elizabethan anti-Machiavellism was merely a series of footnotes to Gentillet's gloss, but Mario Praz, in a brilliant essay in 1928, put an end to that legend.³¹ In France there

²⁹ The suggestion to this effect by Rathé ("Innocent Gentillet," 209) is at least plausible, although for a treatise as polemical as Gentillet's an association with humanistic didactic literature might require a stretch of the imagination.

³⁰ *Discovrs . . . contre Nicolas Machiavel*, 141. "The primary and principal object for which he [a prince] must employ his counsel . . . is that the pure and true Religion of God be understood, and, being understood, that it be observed by him and his subjects. Machiavelli, on this matter, like a true atheist and despiser of God, teaches his Prince otherwise; for he would not have his Prince concern himself whether the religion he holds is true or false. . . ." Here Gentillet is in accord with later Catholic anti-Machiavellians who developed arguments against religious toleration from the same premise.

³¹ Praz demonstrated that Machiavelli was known in England directly through French translations (the first printed English translation of the *Discourses* and the *Prince* did not appear until 1636 and 1640 respectively) long before Gentillet's work was published. As for the Elizabethan Machiavellian-type stage villain, he pointed to

is no evidence of an immediate impact. Protestants, as we have seen, needed no encouragement to hurl their own invectives, and the *Contre-Machiavel* represented the final onslaught rather than the initial offensive against Machiavellian-inspired persecution.³² A decade later the learned Huguenot general, François de la Noue, confessed that Gentillet's book had made him lose his admiration for the Florentine, but unlike his coreligionists he did not credit him with the massacre and he continued to regard the *Prince* and the *Discourses* as no more pernicious to adults than the fantasies of Amadis de Gaul were to youth.³³ Protestant writers, in fact, went directly to Machiavelli for their ammunition and did not make use of an intermediary. It is possible to detect traces of Gentillet's influence among writers later in the century, such as the royalist François de Gravelle who repeated his notion that Machiavelli's prince eschewed all counsel,³⁴ but there is no reason to regard every distortion of Machiavelli as an echo of Gentillet. The *Contre-Machiavel*, after all, was only part of the syndrome of Machiavelli-baiting by exaggerated and isolated quotation. Witness the maxims attributed to the Florentine in a remonstrance published the same year:

A prince . . . who is constrained to use clemency towards his subjects courts his own ruin; a prince who maintains divisions among his subjects will be better obeyed; the means of rendering subjects obedient is to make them poor.³⁵

its Senecan origins rather than its recent importation from Italy. "Machiavelli and the Elizabethans," 1-9, 15-25. More recent evidence points to the likelihood that there was access to the original by mid-sixteenth century. See *A Machiavellian Treatise* by Stephen Gardiner, ed. and trans. by Peter Samuel Donaldson (Cambridge, 1975), 18-20, as well as his edition of George Rainsford's "Ritratto d'Ingleterra" in *Camden Miscellany*, 27 (1979), 49-112.

³² The final blow was actually administered by the author of the *Vindiciae contra tyrannos* (1579) who dedicated his treatise to the struggle against "the evil arts" and "perverse counsel" of Machiavelli. See the preface, written in 1577, in the 1600 edition (Oberursel), A2 r°. Curiously, the tract is bound together with a Latin edition of Machiavelli's *Princeps* as well as anti-Machiavellian tracts by Osorio and the Jesuit, Antonio Possevino.

³³ La Noue admitted that he had found the *Prince* and the *Discourses* "a singular pleasure to read" because their author "treats lofty and noble political and military matters." As for the massacre, he did not implicate Machiavelli directly, but he saw in it the "wicked ways and inventions" of the Italians. *Discours politique et militaires*, ed. by F. F. Sutcliffe (Geneva, 1967), 105, 160-76.

³⁴ *Politiques royales* (Lyons, 1596), 254.

³⁵ *Remonstrance d'un bon catholique françois, aux trois estats de France, qui s'assembleront à Blois*, . . . (n.p., 1576). The tract has been traditionally attributed to Duplessis-Mornay, but D. Thickett contends that the author is Pasquier. "Estienne Pasquier and His Part in the Struggle for Tolerance," in G. Berthoud *et al.*, *Aspects de la propagande religieuse* (Geneva, 1957), 381 n.

Gentillet's service to subsequent anti-Machiavellians was in abstracting his adversary's ideas and categorizing them under the headings of arbitrary government, irreligion, and political amorality.³⁶

At any rate, anti-Machiavellism had emerged fully developed on the French scene during the crisis of the 1570s, and from then to the end of the century it was to be a gauge of the health of French political life. One can discern a fairly consistent correlation between the periods of crisis and the frequency with which Machiavelli's name appears in disputatious tracts. In the spate of defamatory protest that marked the aftermath of St. Bartholomew's Day the references are numerous and he appears almost exclusively under Protestant copyright.³⁷ No longer is he seen in the role of the historian or even the coldly dispassionate political analyst; instead he becomes the nefarious adviser behind royal policies, seducing the crown into bad faith and deception, into using religion for political purposes, and in general into abandoning the high road of moral and constitutional government for the devious path of tyrannical or arbitrary rule. He is associated with all the abuses committed by the Italian court favorites, notably their rapacity and their financial exactions, but even in their righteous anger the Protestant anti-Machiavellians did not see their nemesis as the author of all variety of devices and crimes. And, except perhaps for Gentillet, they avoided the broader implications of the Italian's treatment of religion.

In the years following the Peace of Bergerac in 1577 Machiavelli's appearance became less noticeable, and during the early 1580s one might have concluded that he had returned to the grave for good. But a new surge of anti-Machiavellism was brought on by the final series of crises of the Wars of Religion. The Parisian Barricades, Henry III's forced flight from Paris, his murder of the Guises and his own assassination, the struggle of Henry IV with the Catholic League and his eventual conversion gave rise to a war of pamphlets the likes of which had never been seen before. Once again the spirit of Machiavelli was conjured up and he became a phantom warrior in the ideological battles, changing his shape and switching sides as circumstances required. Now he appears as the rebellious Henry of Guise, ambitious

³⁶ The book's three divisions are entitled *Conseil*, *Religion*, and *Police*.

³⁷ A notable exception is a Catholic remonstrance of 1578 accusing Protestants in the Lowlands of being "instructed in the wicked doctrine of Machiavelli" because they saw religion only in political terms. The author inveighs particularly against the praise that Machiavelli bestows on Numa Pompilius (*Discourses*, I, 12) for introducing a new religion into Rome: "In countries where a religion is established, when it is changed God removes from the inhabitants the fruit of the earth and renders them sterile. . . ." Braechmus Damus, *Remonstrance avx habitans dv Pais Bas, povr les reünir au deuoir de vrays & loyaux subiets* ([Rheims], 1578), 5-8. See also *Aduertissemens a la noblesse sur vne lettre imprimée & publiée soubz le nom du roy de Nauarre à ladicté noblesse* (n.p., 1580), 22.

and hypocritical, “masked under a false visage of religion,” now as Henry of Navarre, intending “to gain the crown as a fox and to reign like a lion.” We see him as an adviser to Henry III, recommending the murder of the Guises and then arguing in justification that “there are some iniquities that are offset by public utility.”³⁸ Here he is an “atheistic *politique*,” there a hypocritical Leaguer. Emblazoned on his banner were such epithets as: “Evangelist of the *Politiques*,” “Forger of Tyranny,” “Court Evangelist,” “Miserable Atheist,” “Machiavelli’s Venom,” “the good Florentine,” and “the venerable doctor Machiavelli.”³⁹

This is not to say that Machiavelli was recognized everywhere or that his name became a household word throughout France; polemicists, in fact, failed to apply his name to situations where a Machiavellian association seemed especially appropriate.⁴⁰ When they did, it was frequently without much discernment, signifying nothing more than an attempt to attach a pejorative sobriquet to an opposing party. In such cases a brief association of Machiavelli with a cause or an individual sufficed to register their disdain. One could say that they judged Machiavelli by the company they gave him, and the nature of his associations during this period is significant. He ceased to be known primarily as the friend of tyrants, the constant companion of Catherine de’ Medici and her sons, the trusted adviser of the persecuting Guises, although he did not break off his past ties completely. His intimacy now was with the *politiques*, “those who prefer the peace of the kingdom . . . to the salvation of their souls,” according to one description,⁴¹ with irreligious princes and oppressors of the

³⁸ *Remonstrance aux Francois svr levr sedition, rebellion et felonnie contre la Majesté du roy . . .* (n.p., 1589), 26; *L’arpocratie, ou Rabais du caquet des Politiques & Jebusiens de notre âge, . . .* (1589), in *Memoires de la Ligue . . .* (Amsterdam, 1758), IV, 113.

³⁹ *La contrepoison contre les artifices et inventions des politiques & autres ennemis de la religion Catholique . . .* (Paris, 1589), 13; *Les causes qui ont contraint les Catholiques à prendre les armes* (1589), in *Mem. de la Ligue*, III, 527; *La foy et religion des politiques de ce temps* (Paris, 1588), 62; *Response a la lettre, contenant le Discovrs veritable sur la prinse des armes & changemens aduenus en la ville de Lyon . . .* [Lyon, 1593], 8; Gravelle, *Politiques royales* (1596), 110, 222, 399.

⁴⁰ It was not invoked, for example, by the opponents of the Edict of Nantes and rarely invoked against the Jesuits. An exception to the latter is the *Furius ater Cobalus, ov Le triomphe de l’ignorance & de l’hypocrisie* [n.p., 1603] in which a Jesuit is heard praising “our great Machiavelli” (4). For the most part the Jesuits were regarded as a Spanish, not an Italian, imposition. See [Antoine Arnauld], *Le franc et veritable discovrs av Roy svr le restablissement qui luy est demandé pour les Iesuites* (n.p., 1602) and *La Sibille françoise, ov Derniere remonstrance au Roy* (Ville-Franche, 1602).

⁴¹ Gaspard de Saulx-Tavannes, *Mémoires*, in *Collection complète des mémoires relatifs à l’histoire de France*, ed. C. B. Petitot (Paris, 1819-29), XXIV, 322.

Church; and, if he was still associated with Henry III, it was less because of the king's tyranny than because he "used religion as he saw it expedient for the state."⁴² As the confidant of Henry of Navarre he urged him both to convert and not to convert, solely out of "reasons of state;"⁴³ and to various politicians he is said to have advised "that one need not worry about faith or integrity, but only the appearance of it," "that the mantle of piety is sufficiently large to cover hypocrisy," that they should "not keep or carry out good faith unless it be for their own profit and advantage," and that one must "be a great hypocrite and dissembler."⁴⁴

Who were the new anti-Machiavellians? During the 1580s the Huguenots became indistinct as an ideological party. Their logical successors were the *Politiques* who, because of their devotion to political peace and religious toleration, might be expected to have carried on the tradition of denunciation by association when these objectives were threatened after the middle of the decade. An occasional *politique* anti-Machiavellian thrust, directed at divisiveness and a royal breach of faith, did in fact follow the formation of the Catholic League and the return to a policy of persecution in 1585; later, through similar means, they called into question the religious zeal of Henry of Guise, his successor the Duke of Mayenne, and the League itself.⁴⁵ The *Politiques*, though, increasingly were placed in the role of defenders of legitimate monarchy, and from that uncom-

⁴² *Les causes qui ont contraint les Catholiques à prendre les armes* (1589), in *Mem. de la Ligue*, III, 525.

⁴³ *Raison d'état* (the actual term was used frequently) became the chief argument against conversion in Huguenot tracts. See, for example, *Advertissement au Roi, ou sont déduites les raisons d'Etat pour lesquelles il ne lui pas bien de changer de Religion* (1593), in *Mem. de la Ligue*, V, 346 ("Il est ici question de l'utilité") and *Réponse à l'instance & proposition que plusieurs font, que pour avoir une paix générale . . . il faut que le Roi change de Religion* (1591), *ibid.*, IV, 688. *Politique* opponents of conversion uncharacteristically argued on the higher plane that it was Machiavellian to change religion for political reasons: "Our king does not behave that way," wrote one indignant royalist; "he cannot follow your advice taken from Machiavelli who uses your same examples to persuade his Prince to employ simulation in matters of religion." *Le vray Catholique Romain contre le Ligvevr couuert* (n.p., 1591), Aii v°.

⁴⁴ Gravelle, *Politiques royales*, 26; *Discours en forme de declaration, sur les causes des mouvemens arrivés à Lyon . . .* (1593), in *Mem. de la Ligue*, V, 441; *Advertissemens a la noblesse sur vne lettre* (1580), 22; [Claude de Rubys], *Responce a l'anti-espagnol, semé ces iours passez par les rues & carrefours de la ville de Lyon, . . .* (Lyon, 1590), 37.

⁴⁵ *Apologie de la paix* (Paris, 1585), 86, 132; *Considerations svr les trovbles, et le iuste moyens de les appaiser* (n.p., 1591), Aiii v°-Aiv r°; *Remonstrance avx Francois svr levr sedition, rebellion et felonnie, contre la Majesté du Roy* (n.p., 1589), 26-27; *Responce a la lettre, contenant le Discovrs* (1593), 8, 12.

fortable position they encountered difficulties in making the label of Machiavellian stick to a League which could claim as its *raison d'être* the preservation of Catholicism; they were either unwilling or unable to stretch Machiavellian concepts to cover their adversary's position.

This was not a problem for the apologists of the League, who found it a far easier task to transform Machiavelli into an effective multi-purpose weapon for slander, and they discharged its grapeshot at whoever stood in their way. The erstwhile anti-Machiavellians, the Huguenots and their supporters, they dismissed as anti-Christian, "corrupt in their Machiavellian religion" and "covertly and maliciously trained in Machiavelli's academy;" and the royalist, Pierre de Belloy, who had played into their hands by quoting the Florentine in his defense of the Salic Law, was described as "an atheist and Machiavellian as well as a Huguenot."⁴⁶ Frenchmen were warned that the noble supporters of Henry of Navarre ("corrupt in their Machiavellian religion") were using tactics derived from the *Prince* to destroy Catholicism, and Navarre himself was pronounced a "disciple of Machiavelli."⁴⁷ No one was more frequently traduced than Henry III, who was regarded as a dangerous apostate for failing to enforce repressive measures against the Protestants; and no event, not even the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day (1572), brought forth so many Machiavellian denunciations as his murder of the Duke and the Cardinal.

The way in which the king was "Machiavellized" is revealing. As long as any hope remained that he would return to the Leaguist cause, Henry was spared direct association; censure for the royal policy of religious leniency was reserved for his Machiavellian advisers who, it was claimed, deceived the king into ruling arbitrarily, prevaricating and, above all, reneging on his promise to rid France of heresy. "His majesty, kind and gentle by nature," went one writer, "has been prejudiced by the sinister advice of certain crafty disciples of the Florentine secretary;"⁴⁸ and another placed the blame on "the damnable advice of the Evangelist of the Court, Machiavelli," by which princes are taught to have contempt for "all justice, peace,

⁴⁶ Jean Boucher in *Lettre missive de l'evesque du Mans. Avec la responce à icelle* . . . (Paris, 1589), 21; and [André de Rossant], *Les meurs, humeurs et comportements de Henry de Valois* . . . (Paris, 1589), 78. See also *La vie et innocence des deux freres* . . . (Paris, 1589), 23. Belloy cites Machiavelli in *Examen dv discovrs pvblié contre la maison royalle de France* . . . (n.p., 1587), 95.

⁴⁷ Boucher compares Navarre to Elizabeth of England in *Lettre missive* . . . (1589), 21. See also [Rubys], *Responce a l'anti-espagnol* (1590), 37; Alfonso del Bene, *Coppie des lettres escrites a d'Epemon* [Paris, 1589], 12-13. Bene was Bishop of Albi.

⁴⁸ *Le dispositif, avec advertissement et advis à messieurs les deputez des estats generaux, pour l'annee 1588* (n.p., 1588), 9.

equity, law, faith, and religion.”⁴⁹ With the assassination, however, this fiction was removed and the king is depicted in true Italian regalia. One particularly acerbic attack emphasized his Medicean lineage, the continuity of his policies with those of “the Florentine Circe” and her Chancellor, Michel de L’Hôpital, “the arch-atheist of our times,” and concluded: “This atheist son of a Florentine” is “imbued with the religion of Machiavelli.”⁵⁰ Henry’s act of treachery left him vulnerable to charges of every sort of Machiavellian knavery, although it was admitted that such a deed was not worthy of the master himself;⁵¹ it even provided an opportunity to protest against royal taxation in the name of anti-Machiavellism.⁵²

Yet the king’s murderous act, evidence in itself that he had been diligently instructed in Machiavelli’s school for tyrants, was more significant for what it revealed to contemporaries about his attachment to Catholicism. Henry’s religious devotions, his patronage of the Hieronymites, the Penitents, and the Order of the Holy Spirit now took on the appearance of mere Machiavellian “pageantry and fiction,” and Frenchmen were cautioned not to be deluded by them:

Oh, you fools at heart and blind to judgment! Don’t you realize that princes tainted again and again with the doctrine of Machiavelli are told to appear devout in order to make their holy piety a cover not only for their tyranny but also for their household filth and public exactions.⁵³

A far more serious crime, even than dissimulated piety, was his subordination of religion to *raison d’état*: “According to the pernicious advice of Machiavelli, he used religion as he considered it expedient for his state, unaffected by it except when it was useful.”⁵⁴ And many

⁴⁹ *La foy et religion des politiques de ce temps* (1588), 62.

⁵⁰ *Contre les fausses allegations que les plvs qu’Achitofels, conseillers cabinalistes, proposent pour excuser Henry le meurtrier de l’assassinat . . .* (n.p., 1589), 32, 73.

⁵¹ This was the conclusion of one astute apologist for the League: “Even when the prince, out of hatred, malevolence, or envy would have someone killed unjustly, the doctor of your court, Machiavelli, counsels him to have it done by the authority of justice and not by violence, judging this method extremely pernicious to the state. . . .” *Responce des Catholiques zelez et vnis, pour la conservation de la religion Catholique, Apostolique & Romaine, à la declaration de Henry troisieme de ce nom . . .* ([Paris], 1589), Di r^o-v^o.

⁵² It was clearly a case of guilt by association. The sins of one generation of Italian financial advisers were attributed to the “father” of Italianate policy, and Machiavelli is misrepresented as advising the king to “impose taille upon taille, gabelle upon gabelle, impost upon impost . . . on his people.” Rossant, *Les meurs, humeurs et comportements de Henry de Valois* (1589), 22.

⁵³ *Contre les fausses allegations que les plvs qu’Achitofels . . . proposent* (1589), 20. See also Rossant, *Les meurs, humeurs et comportements* (1589), 21.

⁵⁴ *Les causes qui ont contraint les Catholiques* (1589), in *Mem. de la Ligue*, III, 525.

feared in this a deliberate Machiavellian plot to undermine the Catholic Church through religious toleration.⁵⁵

It was this same fear that led League apologists to hurl their anathemas at the *Politiques*, whose name almost became synonymous with Machiavellian. Pasquier reported early in 1588 that the Parisian preachers were referring to the moderates "sometimes as *Politiques*, sometimes as Machiavellians, that is to say, entirely without religion," and subsequent pamphlets elaborated on that theme.⁵⁶ Their alliance with the Huguenots, their willingness to permit religious diversity in the name of the preservation of the state, their acceptance of the Protestant Navarre as legitimate successor to Henry III, and, above all, their separation of political from religious loyalties convinced apprehensive Catholics that the *Politiques* were Machiavellian converts whose objective was nothing less than the secularization of the French state. This is the implication in most of the Machiavellian associations, an implication that becomes a direct accusation in the famous *Dialogue d'entre le Maheustre et le Manant* (1593). To the *politique* Maheustre's assertion that the state is "the foundation of religion" and religion only its ornament, the Catholic Manant replies: "It is a horrible blasphemy to subordinate religion to the state. . . . I see you know your Machiavelli. . . . You would place God in a corner of the state."⁵⁷ At the very least Machiavelli represented a political system that was indifferent to religion.

What emerges from the pamphlet literature in this last and ebullient stage of the Wars of Religion is an image of Machiavelli, albeit a

⁵⁵ See, for example, *Advis avx Catholiques Francois, svr l'importance de ce qui se traicte aujour d'huy sur l'irresolution de quelques scrupuleux* . . . (Paris, 1589), 13; Rubys, *Responce a l'anti-espagnol* (1590), 38-39; Rossant, *Les meurs, humeurs et comportements* (1589), 10-11.

⁵⁶ A Monsieur de Sainte Marthe, last day of February, 1588, in *Oeuvres*, II, cols. 329-30. "Politiques et Machiavellistes" or some variation of the phrase was a common appellation in League pamphlets. See *Declaration des consuls, echevins & habitants de la ville de Lyon, sur l'occasion de la prise des armes par eux faite* (1589), in *Mem. de la Ligue*, III, 277; *Exhortation a la Sainte Union des Catholiques de France* (1589), *ibid.*, III, 512; and *Advertissement a Messieurs les deputed des estats, assemblez en la ville de Paris* . . . (n.p., 1593), 51. One tract refers to the "mundane Machiavellian and *politique* sapience" of Henry III and to his officers as "*politiques* for their own advantage, without law, and in two words, sorcerers and atheists" (Rossant, *Les meurs, humeurs et comportements* [1589], 26, 31); while another writer described them as "certain French Machiavellians, whom we have learned to call atheist *politiques*" (*Contre les favsses allegations qve les plvs qu'Achitofels* . . . *proposent* [1589], 19).

⁵⁷ In *Satyre Menippée, de la vertu du Catholicon d'Espagne, et de la tenue des Estats de Paris* . . . (Ratisbon, 1711), III, 376. See also *Responce à la supplication, contre celuy lequel faisant semblant de dōner aduis au roy de se faire Catholic, veult exciter ses bōs subiects à rebellion* (n.p., 1591) which inveighs "against all the disciples of Machiavelli . . . who are not concerned with what the king's religion is provided that he pleases his people" (54).

hazy one, as the devil's disciple whose singular purpose was to induce Frenchmen to destroy the religious foundations of the monarchy. His notorious vices were naturally objectionable, but they might have been more tolerable had he not committed the unpardonable sin of coupling amorality and impiety with a utilitarian view of religion. Machiavelli's notion of a despiritualized religion, serving as nothing more than a means toward a political goal, an *instrumentum regni*, clashed with the traditional French view that the state was part of a divinely ordered political world. This is what aroused the greatest bitterness against him. French anti-Machiavellism, then (at least this late phase of it), was an attempt to shatter the image not of Shakespeare's "murderous Machiavel" but of Machiavelli the "Apostle of the Secular State."

Virtually all the writers who referred to Machiavelli saw him in this role, but few depicted it more clearly than did François de Gravelle: "I will not be of the opinion of the Machiavellians," he wrote in his *Politiques Royales* (1596),

that one should never concern oneself with the Christian religion except to disparage it as obscure, contentious and unfit for a great republic: Here is the ridiculous opinion put forth by that devil of an atheist, nonetheless admired by his Italian compatriots, that apostle from the depths of hell according to whose doctrines the prince is advised to have contempt for all religion.⁵⁸

Gravelle's counsel to his own prince was a further rebuke to the Italian: he must be the good shepherd to his subjects, caring for their souls, and must hold to the "true" faith. Compromise in religion, he maintained, is not only Machiavellian, it is "pernicious and often leads to trouble in the state"—an ironic position for a royalist just two years before the Edict of Nantes.⁵⁹

Gravelle's distinction is but another recognition of that dichotomy which had been apparent in France for some time between the "homo politicus" and the Christian statesman. In the 1560s, well before Machiavelli had become a myth, contemporaries were commenting upon the appearance on the French scene of a new breed of secular politician. Cardinal Granvelle in 1564 accused Admiral Coligny of being "more a *politique*, as they say in France, than a devotee" and the historian De Thou noted that the word *politique* was already being taken in a bad sense.⁶⁰ A sign of the growing divergence between politics and religion was the transformation of *politique* into a highly charged term of opprobrium used to characterize anyone who appeared to subordinate religious to political considerations, a trans-

⁵⁸ *Politiques Royales*, 222; also 213-14, 224-25.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁶⁰ Granvelle to Baron de Belweller, July 5, 1564, *Papiers d'état du Cardinal de Granvelle*, ed. by Ch. Weiss (Paris, 1841-52), VIII, 118; Jacques-Auguste de Thou, *Histoire universelle* (London, 1734), VII, 38.

formation that the Leaguer Louis d'Orléans tells us in his doggerel was completed in the course of the religious wars:

The name *politique* was a name of honour,
A fitting name for a just governor, . . .
Now this proud name, mired with iniquity
Is an ugly name, which destroys all polity,
A dishonoured name, a name to dispise
Shamed by crimes of those to whom it
applies.⁶¹

How much Machiavelli was responsible for the changed political atmosphere in France is hard to say, but according to one observer's commentary on the spirit of the times, his influence was paramount. "The tragedy of our present century," lamented Pasquier, "is that in order to be considered an able man one must be a Machiavellian."⁶² His words are "il faut Machiavellizer"—Machiavellize—a neologism that he did not consider necessary to define; but Agrippa d'Aubigné, who also employed the word, leaves no doubt about its meaning:

Our kings who have learned to
Machiavellize,
To affairs of state their souls disguise,
Harnessing piety to needs of royalty
Treating religion as a form of polity.⁶³

The Protestant d'Aubigné would not have been happy with the definition some of his Catholic contemporaries had in mind, for un-

⁶¹ Ce nom de Politique estoit vn nom d'honneur,
C'estoit le iuste nom d'un iuste Gouverneur, . . .
Auioird'huy ce beau nom souillé de mille vices
N'est plus qu'un nom d'horreur qui destruit les Polices
Vn nom plein de vergongne, & qu'on a mesprisé
Par le crime de ceux qui en ont abusé.

Le banquet et apres disnee dv Conte d'Arete, ov il se traicte de la dissimvlation du Roi de Nauarre & des moeurs de ses partisans (Arras, 1594), 21-22.

⁶² *Recherches*, VI, 5 in *Oeuvres*, I, col. 535. As the preceptor of *ragione di stato* Machiavelli has to share part of the credit with Tacitus, especially after 1589 when Giovanni Botero exposed the Roman historian's seamy side. See Kenneth C. Schellhase, *Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought* (Chicago, 1976), Chaps. 5 and 6; and J. H. M. Salmon, "Cicero and Tacitus in Sixteenth-Century France," *American Historical Review*, 85 (Apr. 1980), 307-31.

⁶³ Nos Rois qui ont appris à machiaveliser,
Au temps et à l'estat leur ame desguiser,
Ployans la pieté au joug de leur service
Gardent religion pour ame de police.

Les tragiques in *Oeuvres* ed. by Henri Weber ([Paris], 1969), 69, 45.

derlying their hatred of the Florentine was the belief that Machiavellism was synonymous with the toleration of heresy. This is implied in their repeated association of Machiavelli with the *Politiques*; Gravelle actually made the connection explicit, but he only stated what was obvious to every League writer: that *raison d'état* was the main root of religious toleration.

From the outset of the struggle the case for toleration developed a crypto-Machiavellian component, as apologists tried to adjust to political and legal realities. Among the earliest to do so was Chancellor L'Hôpital, who rationalized his position by explaining that "true and natural prudence is to yield sometimes to circumstances and always to necessity."⁶⁴ And yield he did. A Christian humanist with a deep concern for moral reform, he was ready to sacrifice religious unity for the well-being of the state. "The king does not wish you to start discussing which belief is best," he told the Estates of Saint-Germain in 1562, "for it is not a question here *de constituenda religione, sed de constituenda republica*; even the excommunicate does not cease to be a citizen."⁶⁵ Whether or not he was aware of it, the Chancellor had shifted the basis for civil toleration from "freedom of conscience" to "political necessity," and in so doing he made a breach in the customary unity of church and state.

Bodin was more blatantly Machiavellian in his treatment of heresy. He believed that where religious unity prevailed the ruler must protect the accepted faith "which should not be allowed to become a subject of argument."⁶⁶ What for others, though, was an act of religious zeal, his prince does out of purely political interest. In an obvious reference to Chapter 12, Book I, of the *Discourses*, Bodin remarks:

Even all the atheists agree that nothing holds a state and a republic together like religion, and that this is the main foundation which underlies the power of kings . . . ; one should take great care lest such a sacred thing be treated with contempt or be questioned as a result of disputes, for it will lead to the ruin of states.⁶⁷

If this reasoning suggested a harsh policy toward heresy and heretics, he refused to draw that conclusion; instead he recommended toleration on the basis of similar Italianate wisdom: in a France already divided, with Protestantism a major political force, he advised his prince to be a prudent navigator, yielding "to the storm well

⁶⁴ *Discovrs svr la pacification des troubles de l'an M. D. LXXVII* (1568), in A. H. Taillander, *Nouvelles recherches historiques sur la vie et les ouvrages du chancelier de l'Hospital* (Paris, 1861), 314.

⁶⁵ *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. P. J. S. Dufey (Paris, 1824-25), I, 452-53.

⁶⁶ *Republique*, IV, 7; French edition (1577), 745. ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, Bk. IV, ch. 7, 746.

knowing that resistance would lead to a universal shipwreck.” Little wonder, then, that the names of Bodin and Machiavelli were later linked as preachers of the same gospel.⁶⁸

By the closing decade of the century L'Hôpital's rationale of expediency, under the impact of Gallicanism and political realism, was transformed into a principle of toleration based upon the separation of religion from politics. To a small but growing minority of *Politiques* religious diversity was acceptable not so much because it was prudent “to yield . . . always to nécessité” but because “the rules of religion and the state are different” or, more categorically, because “the state and religion have nothing in common.”⁶⁹ Their radical assumption that the state had a life of its own, a sphere of action and an earthly purpose independent of religious ends, was abhorrent to the League and, indeed, to a majority of Frenchmen. Even *Politiques* like Villeroy, who sought to give politics more autonomy, still maintained that “religion is the principal foundation of all republics” and that human government and divine justice are “so intimately conjoined that they cannot subsist among men without each other.”⁷⁰ Behind this secularization, all were convinced, lurked the demonic spirit of Machiavelli, which had to be exorcised to preserve France as a Christian republic. Through exposing the forms he assumed, the anti-Machiavellians succeeded in making him *spiritus non gratus*. He did manage to stay around, though, to witness the conversion of Henry IV, and while he only put in a rare appearance during the remainder of the reign, France was never able to escape the impact of his earlier visitation.

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⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, Bk. III, 583. Anti-royalist Leaguers saw the cause of the “tyranny” of Henry III in Bodin's exaltation of monarchy as well as in Machiavelli's counsels (see *Le dialogue du Royaume auquel est discoursu des vices et vertus des rois . . . et des justes causes qui peuvent emouvoir le peuple* [Paris, 1589], 37); but it was an Englishman, Ben Jonson, who perceived the deeper nature of their affinity. Witness the advice of Sir Politic Would Be (*Volpone*, IV, 1):

And then, for your religion profess none;
But wonder at the diversity of all;
And, for your part, protest, were there no other
But simply the laws o'th' land, you could content you:
Nic. Machiavel, and monsieur Bodin, both
Were of this mind.

⁶⁹ [Guillaume Ribier?], *Sur l'edict du mois d'Avril 1598* [n.p., 1599], 7-8; *La vraye et légitime Constitution de l'Etat* (n.p., 1591), 12.

⁷⁰ *Advis de M. de Villeroy à Monsieur le Duc de Mayenne . . .* (1589), in *Memoires d'Estat* (Paris, 1665), I, 413.